

Abstract 413

TITLE: When Science Influences Behavior: How New Interventions Can ReSensitize Skeptical Adolescents to HIV's Threat

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ISSUES: Effective HIV prevention seminars long ago abandoned dull medical slide shows. Behavior-based workshops proved more successful in the 1990s as risk behaviors among adolescents generally declined (YBS). But wellpublicized successes of new treatments and declines in AIDS mortality are reducing risk sensitization and erasing motivation for maintaining safer behaviors. How can health educators credibly refute the optimistic headlines, without using preachy "scare tactics"? Can science, usually a bore, be an asset?

SETTING: The intervention has been field tested with 1,800 participants, in school and community-based settings of 6 to 100 persons, and 50% minority representation.

PROJECT: A new role-play intervention was created that first leads students through the benefits of current treatments, and then illustrates treatment *disadvantages*. The role play serves as a deterrent to HIV risk behaviors by "making real" the extent of side effects and treatment failures. This interactive workshop will explain to National HIV Prevention Conference participants the inductive instruction method. A template and script of the activity will be shared with participants to use in their own outreach efforts.

RESULTS: In the first phase of implementation, the new intervention produced higher ratings (97% excellent and 35% good) from participants than the previous transmission risks only model, (89% excellent and 10% good).

LESSONS LEARNED: Non-medically degreed health educators may feel reluctant to speak about medical issues in general, but young people increasingly demand such sound bite "convincers" before they will internalize any prevention message. At the same time, the educator's rhetorical persona is an important component of any successful intervention. New interventions can effectively capitalize on both skill sets.

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